

Press release

Marianna Uutinen | *Bathroom Stories*

13 June – 25 July 2020

Opening Day: Friday, 12 June, 2020, 11 am – 9 pm

“A sad voluptuousness, a despondent intoxication make up the humdrum backdrop against which our ideals and euphorias often stand out, unless they be that fleeting clear-mindedness shredding the amorous hypnosis that joins two persons together.” – Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun*

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce *Bathroom Stories*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by the Finnish artist Marianna Uutinen. This will be her fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. Uutinen’s approach to painting is about materiality and space. Thick layers of acrylic paint are draped across the surface of the canvas to build up a skin-like surface in a non-linear process. Each overlaying gesture negates, blends, and reveals the accumulation of her actions, creating a performative arena in which both a painter and her materials act and react. In her new works, layers of glitter and acrylic paint yield shimmering surfaces that resemble interstellar nebula. Yet Uutinen does not concern herself with the romantic of nature, but rather with proposing a new form of nature. Her recent paintings reveal the dynamism of their materials. Color functions as a non-space, a khôra, which rests between the sensible and intelligible: a space through which everything passes. Constantly shifting and revealing new facets of the work and spaces to enter it, Marianna Uutinen’s recent paintings reveal the animation of matter, proposing a life form through material that reflects melancholia, sex, and death—but also radiant beauty and hope, escapism and banality. If her earlier neon works were like a shout, the subdued palette of her recent paintings are closer to a seething whisper: softly spoken stories about flesh and the stars that take place somewhere between the cosmos and the bathroom floor.

New approaches to storytelling and figuration emerge in Uutinen’s *Bathroom Stories* and their glittering abstract surfaces evoke countless fleeting memories. The philosopher Jane Bennett describes a life as “a restless activeness, a destructive-creative force-presence that does not coincide fully with any specific body.” The non-linear narratives that Uutinen creates in her works emerge from a force field-like space that ensues from her dialogue with materials—and materials’ dialogue with her. Working with glitter and pearlescent paints, Uutinen does not have full control over the optical results of her paintings. Her works relentlessly assert their own materiality, which she develops in turn. The color of the paintings respond to the lighting conditions and the angles that they are viewed from—a reactionary quality that is propelled by their materials. While previous paintings bore traces or imprints of the artist’s own body through her physical interaction with the materials, traces of the figure are now subtly embedded within the composition like a phantom or ghost, a figment of the artist’s imagination or an elusive memory buried beneath mounds of glitter.

Marianna Uutinen (b. 1961, Finland) lives and works in Berlin. Uutinen has exhibited at numerous institutions throughout Europe including Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg; Weserburg Museum of Modern Art, Bremen; the Moderna Museet, Malmö; Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Ludwig Museum, Koblenz; Malmö Konsthall; and Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen. In 1997 Uutinen represented Finland at the Venice Biennale.